

# How you manage your emails may be bad for your health

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New research suggests that it's not just the volume of emails that causes stress; it's our well-intentioned habits and our need to feel in control that backfires on us.

These are some of the key findings presented next week, Thursday 7 January 2016, at the British Psychological Society's Division of Occupational Psychology annual conference in Nottingham by Dr Richard MacKinnon from the Future Work Centre.

The Future Work Centre asked nearly 2,000 working people across a variety of industries, sectors and job roles in the UK about their experience of using email. The research explored whether factors such as technology, behaviour, demographics and personality played a role in people's perception of email pressure.

The research suggests many people have developed some bad habits when it comes to managing email. Nearly half of those surveyed have emails automatically sent to their inbox (push notifications) and 62 per cent left their email on all day. Those who checked email early in the morning and late at night may think they are getting ahead, but they could be making things worse, as the study showed that these habits were linked to higher levels of stress and pressure.

Dr Richard MacKinnon said: "Our research shows that email is a double-edged sword. Whilst it can be a valuable communication tool, it's clear that it's a source of stress of frustration for many of us. The people who

reported it being most useful to them also reported the highest levels of email pressure! But the habits we develop, the emotional reactions we have to messages and the unwritten organisational etiquette around email, combine into a toxic source of stress which could be negatively impacting our productivity and wellbeing."

"Despite organisations attempting to shape policies and procedures to minimise the negative impact of email, it's clear one-size-fits-all advice is ineffective. People are different both in terms of how they perceive [stress](#) and how and where they [work](#). What works for some is unlikely to work for others. We came up with a few tips to help some of those [bad habits](#)."

- To the early morning/late night checkers - put your phone away, do you really need to check your email?
- How about planning your day and prioritising your work, before the priorities of others flood your inbox?
- Consider turning off 'push notifications' and/or turning off your email app for portions of the day, and take control of when you receive [email](#).

You can read the full research report at [www.futureworkcentre.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/fwc-research-report.pdf](http://www.futureworkcentre.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/fwc-research-report.pdf)

Provided by British Psychological Society

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